administered by the Department of Posts. Comprehensive amendments are intended in the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to update its provisions, and ensure that all players in postal sector are subjected to the same discipline.

(c) There is no legislation regulating the couriers.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) and (f) Department of Posts is the principal service provider in the postal sector and in order to modernise its services and enhance customer satisfaction it has taken steps such as:

(a) expansion of Speed Post network;

(b) introduction of new products and services;

(c) computerisation of counter services;

(d) restructuring of delivery system;

(e) computerisation of mail sorting and other functions; and

(f) on line track and trace facility for premium products.

V.P.T. by private basic services operators

2642. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has received a request for help from the private basic service operators in fulfilling Village Public Telephone;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The private basic service operators have requested for concession such as reduction in leased line tariff, handing over traffic

at different points, sharing of infrastructure for providing Village Public Telephones (VPTs).

(c) The private basic operators are free to enter into mutually acceptable agreement with any of the other operators in their respective service areas for providing VPTs.

Failure of Garuda Cellular Phone Service

2643. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether MTNL's cellular phone service "Garuda" has found to be most unsuccessful as reported in the 'Hindu' dated the 28th March, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the private cellular phone companies are providing much better service than that of MTNL;

(c) if so, the facts thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the MTNL to adopt the latest technologies in its cellular phone services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No, Sir. MTNL has received very good response on Garuda service.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) MTNL's cellular phone service uses GSM Technology which is at par with the best technology available.